

Wednesday, May 2, 2007

Duxbury Clipper

Wind Turbine Sites to be Studied

By SUSANNA SHEEHAN

At the recommendation of the Alternative Energy Committee, selectmen this week agreed to investigate further whether seven locations may have the potential to house a wind turbine.

Selectmen voted unanimously to submit a wind site survey application to the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, so this organization can assess the potential for wind generation at seven municipal sites. These sites include Duxbury High School, the middle school, Chandler Elementary school, the transfer station, the town hall, the senior center and town-owned land on Lincoln Street, which is proposed for a future police station.

Jeff Warren of the Alternative Energy Committee said applying for a wind site survey is the first step in moving forward with a small wind turbine project. A small wind turbine would create enough electricity to power town buildings and may even generate extra to sell. However, the turbine must be close to the buildings it will power because the town is not allowed to cross the roads with utility wires because it is not classified as a utility. The town of Hull is its

own utility and generates electricity from its own turbine.

Currently 46 cities and towns are working with the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative to explore community wind projects, said Warren. Residents can see larger wind turbines at the IBEW in Dorchester and at the Massachusetts Maritime Academy on Cape Cod.

The wind site survey will allow Duxbury to see if any of these sites would work for a small wind turbine. It entails a professional site analysis conducted by engineers from the University of Massachusetts' Renewable Energy Research Lab. The engineers will perform site visits to gather data and then examine all information regarding each site.

Warren said that in addition to wind power, the committee is looking at many different alternative energy sources, such as geo-thermal and solar. However, it felt that it could move ahead more quickly with the wind power since resources are in place to support these projects.

"We are diligently looking at all alternatives that might be feasible," said Warren. "Massachusetts is behind the curve in the development of wind power. We just want to start the process so we can have an impact."

Selectmen Chairman Andre Martecchini is on the committee and he said that a portion of each residents' utility bill contributes to a renewable energy trust that can help fund alternative power solutions.

"It costs us nothing," Martecchini said. "Our electricity dollars are paying for this."

In other business, selectmen:

- Listened to a presentation on an affordable housing plan submitted by a consultant hired by the Local Housing Partnership. The consultant created a Planned Production Plan, which is required by the state to show that communities have a roadmap to follow when developing affordable housing. Consultant Philip

Mayfield said the plan contains many strategies the town can use to meet its affordable housing goals. These strategies do not focus solely on building new affordable units, but include other ideas, such as encouraging accessory apartments and preserving the affordable units the town currently has, as some have expirations of their affordability. The plan contains information such as how many affordable homes Duxbury has and how many it needs to meet the state's goal of having 10 percent of all housing classified as affordable.

- Voted to accept recommended guidelines for Duxbury's Senior Tax Work Off program that town meeting voters approved in March. Voters adopted a state law that creates a property tax break program for senior citizens. The state tax-relief program replaces the local one run by the Council on Aging since 1996. The state program allows a \$750 tax break for up to ten seniors age 65 and older who volunteer in various town departments. There are no income requirements. This tax break comes directly as a tax abatement on a senior's third quarter tax bill. Selectmen's approval of the guidelines was the final step in establishing this program.

- Approved the disbursement of \$50,000 in interest from the Lucy Hathaway Trust fund to be used in the following amounts: \$125,000 for street maintenance, specifically for a new type of street paint; \$6,250 for new floats at certain public landings; \$6,250 for repairs to the Powder Point Bridge; \$6,250 to buy shrubs to beautify two gateways to Duxbury; \$3,125 to replace fencing at the Dingley Dell cemetery; \$12,000 for the schools for its integrated pre-school program, and \$3,125 to the library for books. The Lucy Hathaway Trust began in 1932 with \$34,000. It currently has almost \$300,000 in it. The specific uses for the trust's money can be found in the town's annual report.